

South Precinct Email Community Newsletter
August 13, 2008



Dear Community Friends,

Light Rail Testing

As reported in this morning's Seattle Times, Sound Transit will begin testing link light-rail trains in Rainier Valley on Thursday August 14, adding a new to the traffic on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South. The trains will share streets with cars, buses, motorcycles, bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Light Rail tracks pass through 18 intersections and 10 pedestrian signals, plus three stations in the median. Trains will run as often as every six minutes in each direction, at a top speed of 35 mph. Although engineers have designed state-of-the-art signals and walkways, the sheer volume of activity makes this a hazardous five miles.

Left turns from MLK are allowed only on left-turn arrows, to reduce conflicts with trains going straight. Electronic signs show a train icon whenever trains are approaching. There are several "Z-crossings," where short fences channel pedestrians and force them to look in the direction of approaching trains. There are refuge islands in the median where people can stand, if they can only make it halfway.

Safety During Testing and Operation of Light Rail

With light rail testing and the start of service in the summer of 2009, Sound Transit has launched a safety education and awareness campaign for community members and students. To spread the safety message, Sound Transit has bought billboard space, talked with school and community groups, and hung fluorescent warning signs at crossings. Safety brochures have been produced in 12 languages. A light rail safety brochure should have already arrived in your mailbox. The light rail safety education is designed to:

- Bring awareness that light rail trains are quiet, so people should always be alert and look both ways before crossing the street
- Explain the function of the overhead electric power lines, called OCS (overhead catenary system)
- Demonstrate safe pedestrian behavior and light rail crossing safety signs and signals
- Inform the public about safe pedestrian and driving habits and signals.

The key safety messages that Sound Transit wants to impart for South Seattle residents are:

- Link light rail trains move faster than they appear and can't stop as quickly as a car: **cross only at designated crosswalks**
- Trains have the right-of-way; **obey all signals and warning signs**
- Trains are quiet; **always look both ways**
- Tracks are for trains; **never walk or play around trains or tracks**

The Sound Transit community outreach team is also available to speak to small or large groups. Please call Carol Doering at 206-398-5095 to schedule a time, day or evening. You may also email her at carol.doering@soundtransit.org. You can also call and/or email to get the safety brochures in the various languages.

Why Traffic Safety Information is in a Police Department Newsletter

We want to give you information that is pertinent to community public safety, not just crime related information. Nothing is more important than the safety of the members of our community. So, if it means we advise you regarding traffic issues so we can raise awareness and hopefully prevent accidents or fatalities, seems like a good use of ink for us.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator